

Spring 1-15-2003

ENG 4762-001

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English 4762
 Spring, 2003
 CH 3139
 1530-1800 T

Bruce Guernsey
 CH 3605
 581-6290
 Office Hours:
 Thurs 1:30-3:30 PM

Texts:

Illinois Voices, Stein and Murray, eds.
Contemporary American Poetry, Frieibert, ed. (limited copies)

General Comments:

In this course you will be treated as a writer, not as a student. As such, however, you will face far tougher demands than ever before: finding your subject and focusing on it; then shaping that raw material into a poem (poems do have shapes, by the way). And then the revising, the endless revising, revising, revising.

Your guide in this process is the class itself, so listen closely to what we say about your work. Keep an open mind. Maintain your perspective. Be ready to laugh at yourself. What you do with the suggestions made each Tuesday afternoon in our workshop sessions is finally up to you, but no poem will ever be considered finished in here, only "abandoned."

Procedure:

You are responsible for making copies of your poems for the class. The copies--with your name, title, and worksheet number on each--are due by Noon on Monday in my mailbox in Coleman 3155. Make 18 copies and clip them together. I will then have them collated and ready for you to pick up from the envelope on my office door by Noon on Tuesday at the latest. Read the worksheet carefully before each class and make notes on each poem. I will pick up your annotated worksheets from time-to-time to keep you honest about this very important aspect of the workshop, your preparation.

Requirements:

1. class participation
2. 10 "completed" poems or 150 lines, everything revised at least three times
3. a log of poems read with at least three poems per week hand-copied into the log, together with your response to each
4. at least one conference with me during the term; the scheduling of that conference is up to you
5. a prose self-evaluation of 3-5 typed pages to be included in your final folder; final folders will be due the last day of the semester
6. attendance at readings (and the parties that follow)

7. graduate students will have additional requirements that will be arranged individually

Grades:

No individual poems will be graded. Instead, your poems will be continually revised, and the degree to which you revise them, often at the risk of the original poem, will influence your grade. Like the Olympic diver, your "score" will be influenced by the degree of difficulty you impose on yourself. I suggest trying forms, varying your style, and going after what should scare you the most, yourself.

I will discuss your grade during conference if you wish or any other reasonable time, but try to put your writing first. If you do so, the good grade will follow.

A final word: a sense of humor is an important prerequisite in this course. Carry it with you always.